United Nations E/2009/119

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
28 December 2009
English
Original: French

Substantive session of 2010
New York, 28 June to 23 July 2010
Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits: follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development

Summary by the President of the Economic and Social Council on the follow-up to paragraph 56 of the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development**

1. In its decision 2009/258, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretariat to prepare, by 15 September 2009, three reports on the follow-up to requests made in paragraph 56 of the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, held in New York from 24 to 26 June 2009. These reports addressed the following subjects:

(a) "The promotion and enhancement of a coordinated response of the United Nations development system and the specialized agencies in the follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development";

(b) "Enhancing collaboration and cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions";

(c) "The possible establishment of an ad hoc panel of experts on the world economic and financial crisis and its impact on development".

2. The three reports were submitted to the Council on 30 September 2009 by Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development (Department of Economic and Social Affairs).

3. Pursuant to Council decision 2009/258, I convened open-ended informal consultations on each of the three mandates covered by the reports on 19 October, 26 October and 10 November, respectively.

* E/2010/100.

** The oral summary was made by the President at the conclusion of the Council's resumed substantive session, held on 15 December 2009.

09-67026 (E) 070110 080110

Please recycle

4. Also pursuant to decision 2009/258, I have convened the current resumed substantive session of the Council today, in the words of the decision, "to review progress made in the consideration of these issues".

5. I will highlight below the issues on which I believe some consensus has emerged, or could emerge, within the next few weeks and months. I will also put forward ideas and suggestions on the way forward.

First informal consultation

6. The first informal consultation was convened on 19 October 2009 and dealt with the mandate covered in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "The promotion and enhancement of a coordinated response of the United Nations development system and the specialized agencies in the follow-up to and implementation of the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development" (E/2009/114). The Council heard briefings by Mr. Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs (Department of Economic and Social Affairs), who focused on the nine joint crisis initiatives of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and by Mr. Olav Kjørven, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the Bureau for Development Policy of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), who provided specific examples of UNDP crisis responses at the country level.

7. During the subsequent discussion, the importance of the Council's coordinating role was noted regarding the United Nations development system's response to the crisis, given that the Economic and Social Council serves as the principal body for coordination, policy review, dialogue and recommendations on all economic and social development issues, as well as for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals established by major United Nations summits and conferences, including the Millennium Development Goals.

8. It was underlined that in order for the Council to play its role fully, it required up-to-date information, particularly at the country level, and appropriate monitoring structures.

9. It would be useful, in this regard, for the Council to be briefed regularly on the follow-up to the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development and, more broadly, on the activities of CEB, along the lines of the briefing given by Mr. Adnan Amin, Director of CEB, on 10 November 2009.

10. The CEB annual report to the Council's substantive session might also provide an opportunity to strengthen interaction between the Council and the Board, thereby promoting and enhancing the coordinated response of the United Nations development system and the specialized agencies in the follow-up to and implementation of the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development.

11. The Council could also be kept informed about how country programmes are responding to the crisis, building on the steps already taken by the United Nations development system, and how donor countries are helping them mitigate the impact of the crisis.

12. These are some ideas which emerged from our discussions on the role that the Economic and Social Council can play to promote and enhance a coordinated response by the United Nations development system in the follow-up to and implementation of the outcome document.

Second informal consultation

13. On 26 October, I convened the second informal consultation on the issue of "Enhancing collaboration and cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions".

14. For the purposes of the discussion, the Council considered the note by the Secretary-General and heard briefings by Mr. Elliott Harris, Special Representative of the International Monetary Fund to the United Nations, and Mr. Ferid Belhaj, Special Representative of the World Bank to the United Nations. The two representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions noted that collaboration at the Secretariat and inter-agency levels had been stepped up through joint efforts, such as the CEB joint crisis initiative and the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. They emphasized that country-level cooperation benefited from coordination between United Nations agencies, the goodwill of local representatives and leadership from the recipient country. Overall, the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, in their view, provided scope to further expand collaboration.

15. While several Member States agreed with the assessment of the representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions that the existing agreement provided scope for expanded cooperation, some delegations complained that there was insufficient coordination at the decision-making and operational levels between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly in the light of the current world economic and financial crisis. In their view, the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions needed to be reviewed.

16. In view of the mandate entrusted to the Economic and Social Council by the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, I would like to reiterate my appeal of 26 October 2009 calling for Member States to explore practical ways to improve collaboration at the intergovernmental, operational and Secretariat levels.

17. Some interesting ideas have been put forward in this regard. These and other ideas could be further explored in the coming weeks and months.

18. At the intergovernmental level, coordination between Member States' policies in New York and Washington could be improved. This would help the Council to promote informal and formal dialogue between the executive boards of the Bretton Woods institutions and United Nations Member States. In this regard, important opportunities will be provided by the recommendations adopted by the Council and endorsed by the General Assembly with a view to strengthening the financing for development follow-up processes and the forthcoming High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

19. At the operational level, it would be useful for Member States to be more regularly informed about ongoing collaboration. Specific examples of inter-agency cooperation at the Secretariat level could be shared more widely, since there is

generally a lack of awareness about existing advanced forms of collaboration. The Council's debate on operational activities could also be used to consider these issues further, including the specific actions carried out to follow up on the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review.

20. At the Secretariat level, collaboration and cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions are largely carried out within the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, whose report is considered by the Council at its substantive session. Collaboration has recently been improved and should be further strengthened. The idea of joint publications by the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions could also be explored.

21. Overall, a better understanding of the various issues considered by the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and of the related sensitivities within both frameworks, could help the relevant organizations to fulfil their mandates.

Third informal consultation

22. On 10 November, I convened the Council's third informal consultation in order to discuss the request for the Council to consider and make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the possible establishment of an ad hoc panel of experts on the world economic and financial crisis and its impact on development. The Council had before it a note by the Secretariat entitled "Possible establishment of an ad hoc panel of experts on the world economic and financial crisis and its impact on development: past terms of reference and any relevant factors or experience of previous ad hoc panels of experts" (E/2009/113). It also heard briefings by three experts participating in the consultation.

23. Professor Joseph Stiglitz shared his experience as Chairman of the Commission of Experts of the President of the General Assembly on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System, and explained the reasons behind the proposal to establish an ad hoc panel of experts on the world economic and financial crisis. He mentioned that the topics such a panel might study included improved global governance, sovereign debt problems, the possibility of establishing of a new global reserve system and more effective monitoring of financial markets in order to address unemployment.

24. Mr. Tariq Banuri, Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, focused his briefing on the workings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, for which he had coordinated the preparation of reports. He attributed the Panel's success to its perseverance, its links to intergovernmental processes, its flexibility in accommodating a broad range of scientific opinion, and the general urgency of the climate change issue.

25. Mr. Adnan Amin, Director of the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, shared lessons learned during his tenure as the Executive Director of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. As factors that had contributed to the effectiveness of the steps taken, he listed, inter alia, the Panel's high-level membership and the timely organization of a large number of country-level consultations among a wide range of stakeholders.

26. These briefings were followed by a broad exchange of views. While it would be premature to refer to a consensus, particularly since major groupings of Member States have reserved their positions, I believe that the discussions helped to define certain parameters or criteria that the Council should take into consideration when formulating its recommendations on the possible establishment of an ad hoc panel of experts.

27. The need to ensure the relevance and usefulness of such a panel was stressed, as was its complementarity with other processes. Mention was also made of the need, where appropriate, for a selection process that ensured a high level of expertise, a broad range of views and adequate geographical representation among different stakeholders.

28. Given that the swift establishment of an ad hoc panel of experts would enhance its usefulness, I believe that discussions on these and other aspects of this issue should be actively pursued in the coming weeks in order to enable the Council to make specific recommendations to the General Assembly.

29. In view of the time constraints placed upon us and the requests made for additional information, further consultations are clearly needed. However, I believe that we have laid the groundwork for implementation by the Economic and Social Council of the mandates contained in decision 2009/258 and entrusted to it by the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development.

30. In that regard, I should also like to briefly recall the follow-up to the other mandates entrusted to the Economic and Social Council:

- *Financing for development* (paragraph 56 (b) of the Conference outcome document): Last week the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the recommendations submitted by the Economic and Social Council regarding a strengthened and more effective intergovernmental inclusive process to carry out the financing for development follow-up. The challenge now lies in implementing these recommendations fully and effectively and in ensuring that follow-up to financing for development is given due attention and consideration;

- *The strengthening of institutional arrangements to promote international cooperation in tax matters* (paragraph 16 of the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, and paragraph 56 (c) of the outcome document): This issue was touched upon briefly towards the end of the Council's 2009 substantive session, but was not addressed comprehensively. We had hoped for some input from the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, it is my understanding that during its fifth session, held from 19 to 23 October 2009 in Geneva, the Committee did not formally consider the strengthening of institutional arrangements to promote international cooperation in tax matters. Owing to the Second Committee's particularly intensive programme of work and other important ongoing negotiations, no further progress was made on this issue during the autumn. Discussions should therefore continue in preparation for the Council's forthcoming substantive session;

- *The global food security crisis* (paragraph 57 of the outcome document): The Secretary-General has been requested to report to the Council on a regular

basis on the work of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. On 15 December 2009, Mr. David Nabarro, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Food Security and Nutrition and Coordinator of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, briefed the Council on the recent activities of the Task Force;

- *The Global Jobs Pact* (paragraph 58 of the outcome document): In response to my invitation, Dr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organization gave a presentation on the "Global Jobs Pact" to the Council on the opening day of its substantive session. Furthermore, in its resolution 2009/5 of 24 July 2009, the Council welcomed the adoption of the "Global Jobs Pact" and encouraged Member States to promote and make full use of it;

- *The development of global responses to the crisis* (paragraph 59 of the outcome document): Strictly speaking, this mandate was not entrusted to the Council but rather to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which was encouraged to continue to contribute to the development of global responses to the crisis. Nevertheless, I should like to note that on 19 November 2009, I joined Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, in attending a parliamentary hearing on the global response to the crisis co-organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. During the course of my visit, I had an opportunity to report on the Council's efforts to ensure a coordinated response to the crisis.